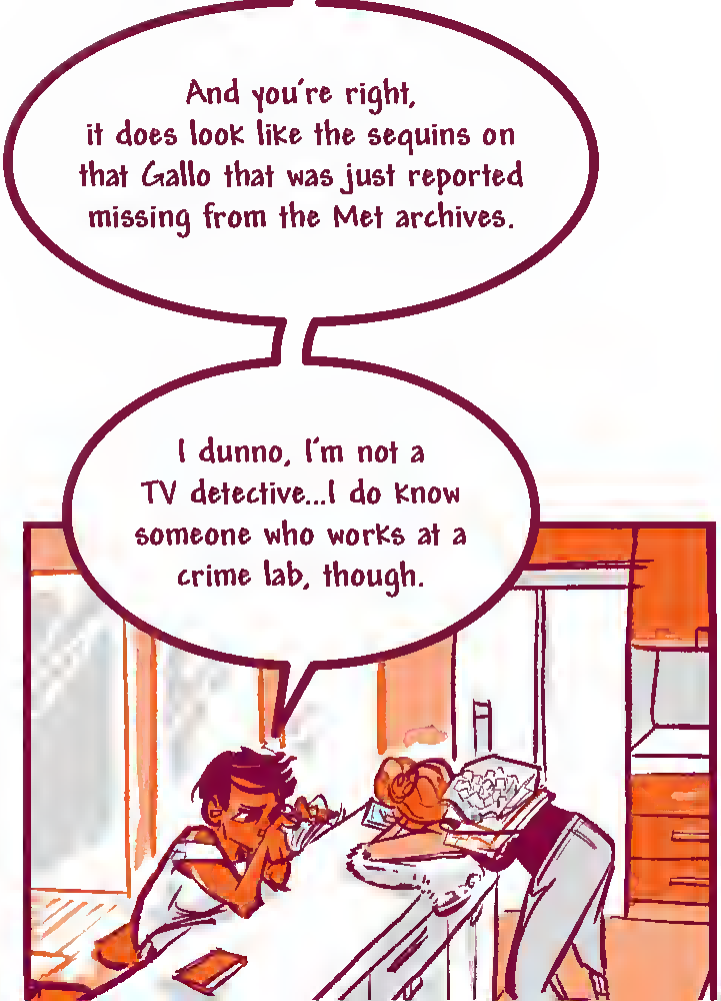
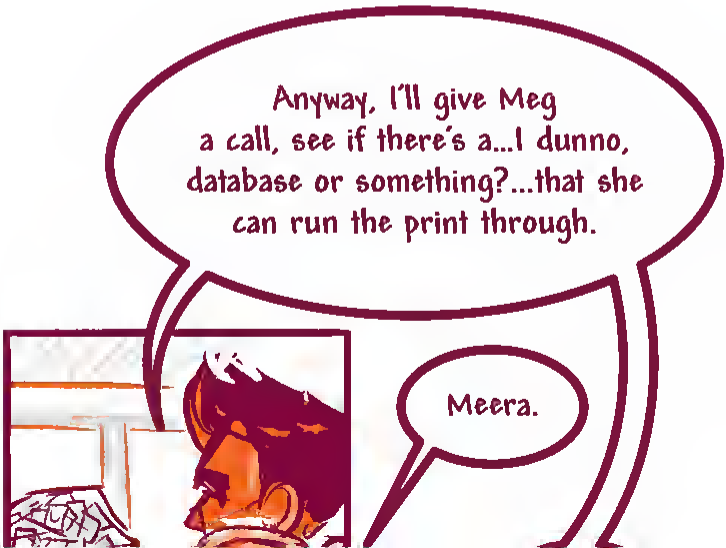
FREEZER FRESH
Yep, in my expert opinion that is definitely a fingerprint.

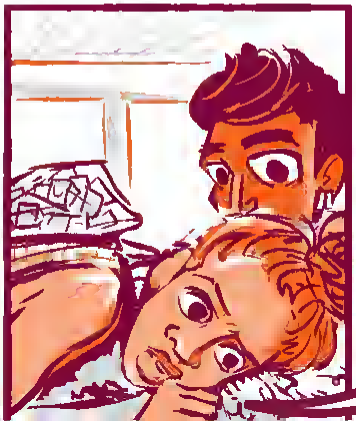

And you're right, it does look like the sequins on that Gallo that was just reported missing from the Met archives.
I dunno, I'm not a TV detective...I do know someone who works at a crime lab, though.

Biblically, I assume?

Wow, falling two stories onto asphalt makes you salty.


Anyway, I'll give Meg a call, see if there's a...I dunno, database or something?...that she can run the print through.
Meera.

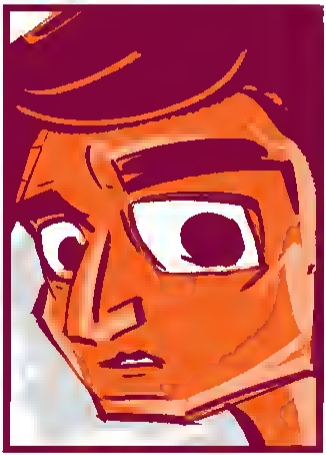
Hm?



Um.

I wanted to talk to you about something.

...Always bodes well.



No no, it's just—um.
...Just what?
So.
The other day, at rehearsals, you called me

"the straight girl."

Oh. Well, good. Sorry, I meant it as a joke, I hope it didn't sound, like, pejorative or—

Not *straight*, I mean.

It's not a big deal or anything! I just thought you should know.

POWER BALLAD

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

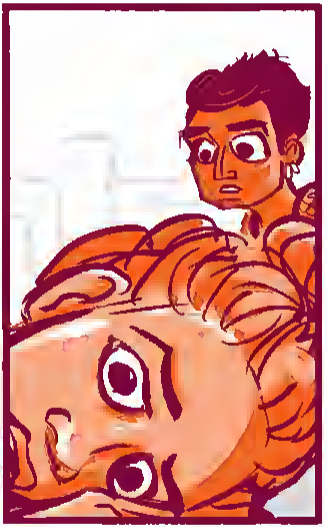
...Oh!

Oh.

I-. Okay?

I mean, obviously it's okay.

So! Is this a...recent thing?



No, it just.

You know.

Never seemed relevant?

But...it's relevant now?

Did.
Did you meet someone, or—?
No!
CLACK!

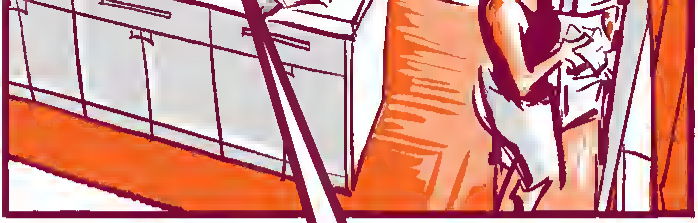
I. No.

Um, you said you'll call your friend about the sequin?

What? Yeah, yeah, I'll do it this afternoon.

Great, thanks.

No problem?



...Carrie, I don't want to pry, but, when you say *not straight*, what exactly are we talking about here?

Um.
You don't have to answer if you don't want to, obviously!
CLINK
CLINK

I just want to make sure I'm, like, respecting your boundaries, or identity, or whatever, you know?

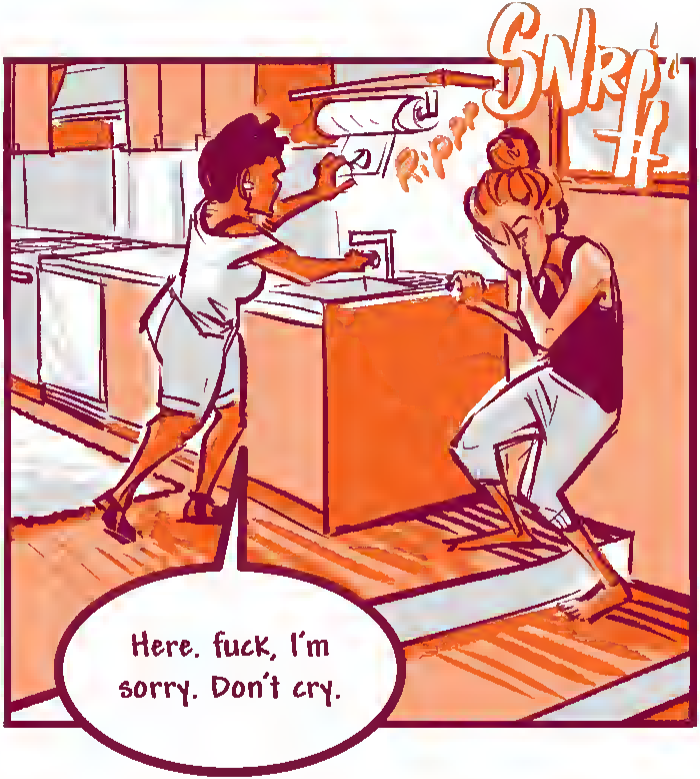
Like, is this a changing pronouns situation...

Or a dating girls situation...

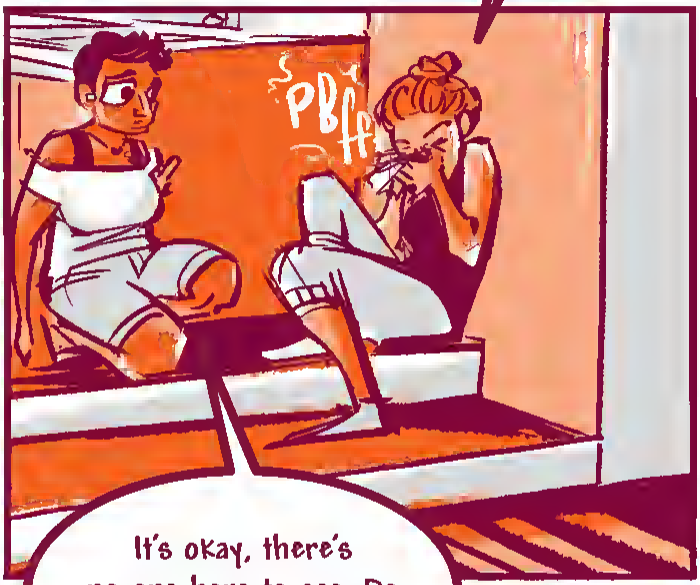
Or a dating no one *ever* situation, or...?

Um.

RAUL
FRSH!
Oh shit.


SNRF!
RIP!
Here. fuck, I'm sorry. Don't cry.

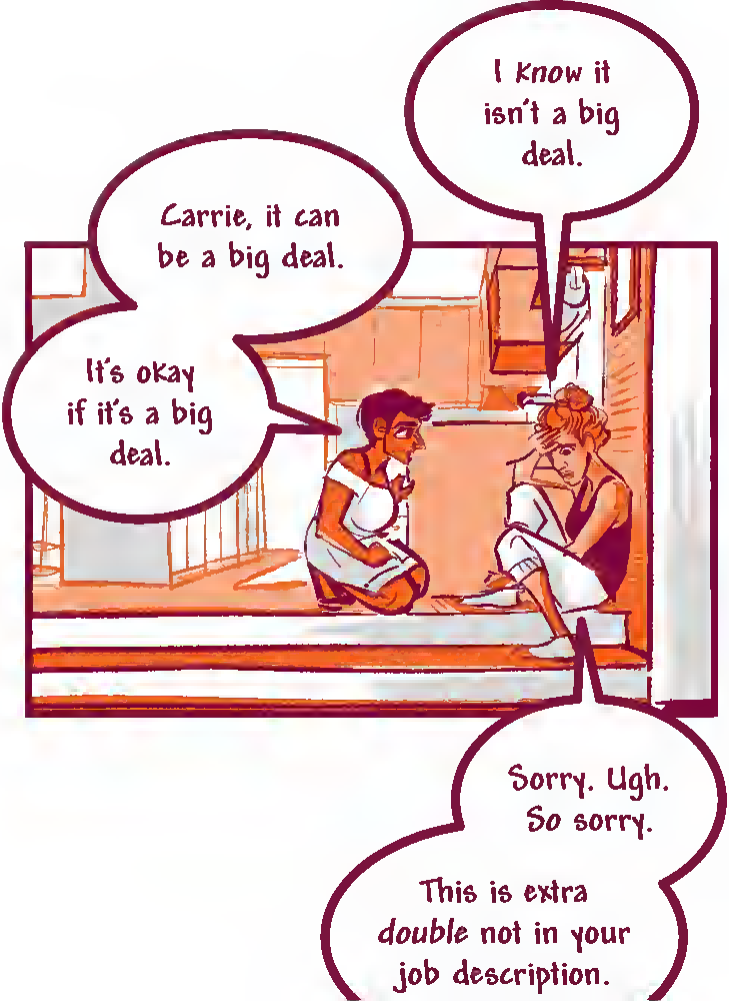
Or cry if you want to, shit. Sorry.
Stop apologizing, Christ!
Sniff
God, this is embarrassing.



It's okay, there's no one here to see. Do whatever you need to.

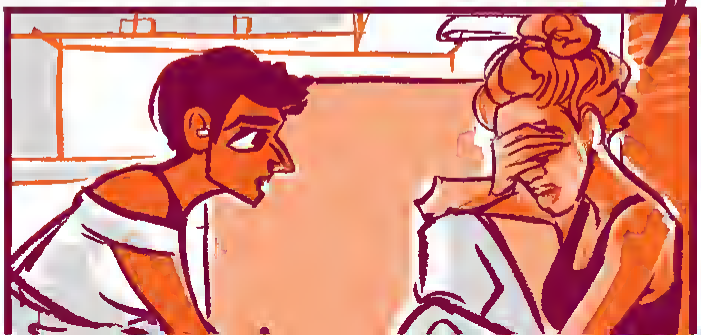
It's fine. You're fine.

Huh?
Ugh. I practiced and everything.
I was gonna be really casual about it.
All "oh *bi* the way— pun intended."


I know it isn't a big deal.
Carrie, it can be a big deal.
It's okay if it's a big deal.
Sorry. Ugh. So sorry.
This is extra double not in your job description.

No, it's not. This is *friend shit*. It's definitely in the friend description.

Yeah, but you shouldn't have to deal with *this*. I'm a disaster.



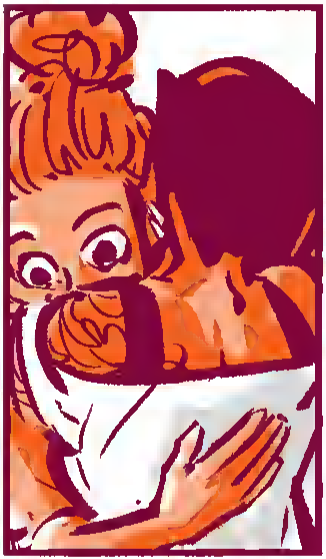
Hey.

Carrie.

Carrie, look at me for a second.

You are allowed to puke your feelings up all over the people who care about you. That's what *caring about you* means.

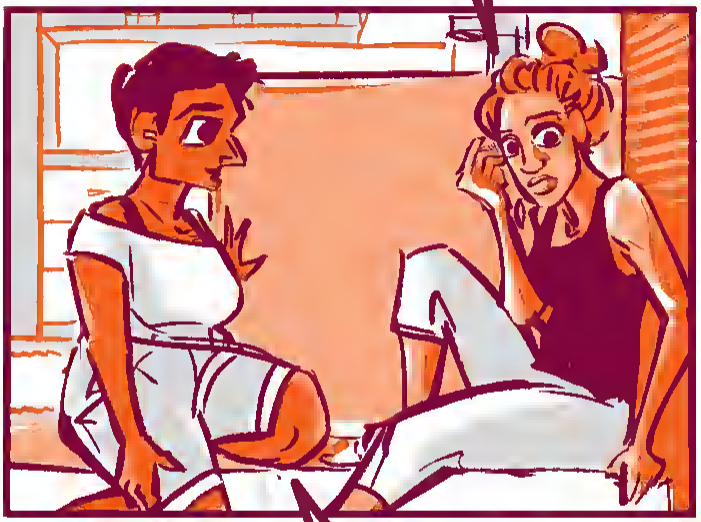
C'mere.
Sof



Everything's gonna be okay.

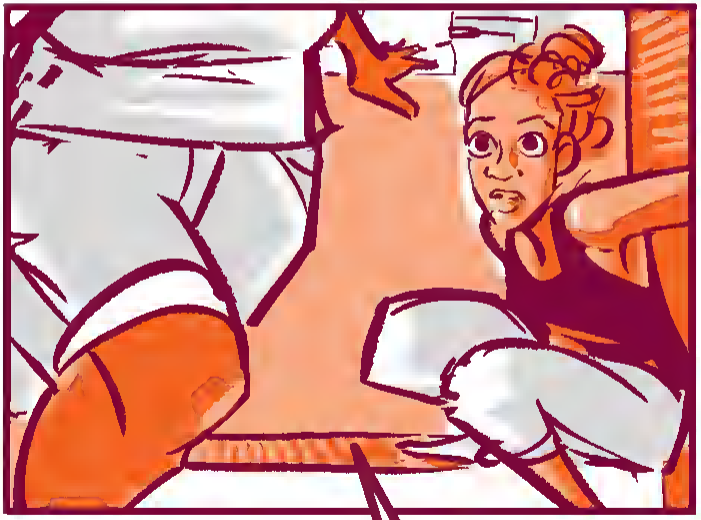
Feel any better?

Um, yeah. Thanks.



Anytime! ...But right now I really need to go to the bathroom.

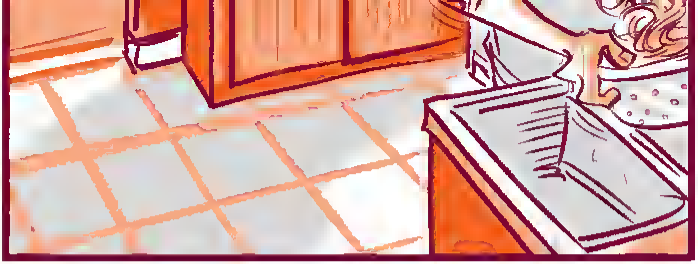
I'll grab you some water while I'm up.



No, stay

right there. I'll be right back. Two minutes.

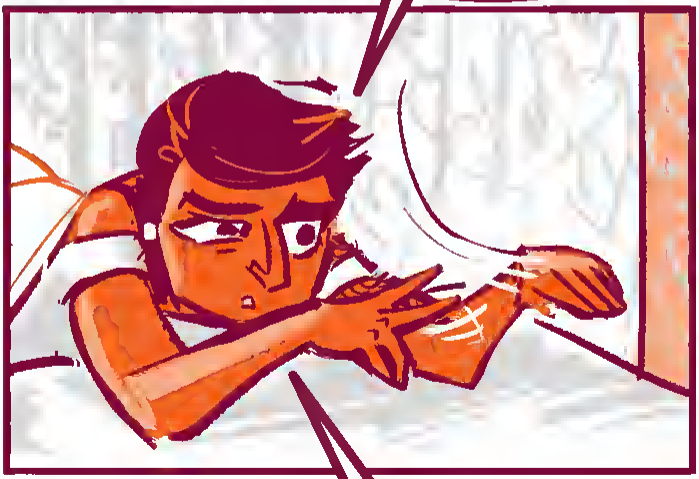
CLICK



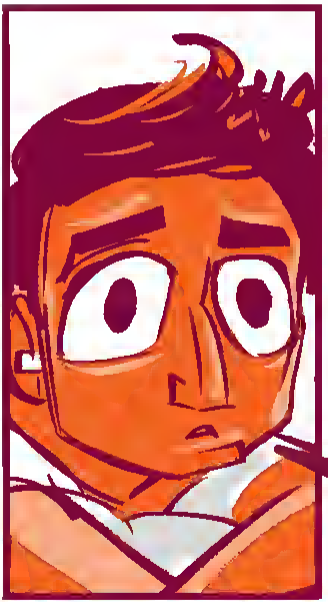
Todd.

Hypothetically speaking.

If I were to break my NDA in order to get your advice about something...



But before I did that I swore on the bones of both my grandmothers to *castrate* you myself if you *ever* breathe a word of it to *anyone*...



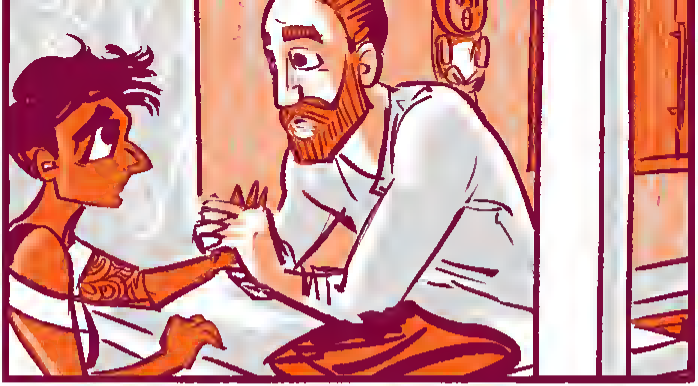
...could I tell you a secret?

Meera, what's going on? Are you in trouble?
You tell me secrets all the time.
You know you can trust me with anything short of an actual murder cover-up.

This one's different.

It isn't really my secret to tell, but I'm *freaking out*, and I need to talk to someone about it or I'm gonna do something *really stupid*.

You're my stupidity safety valve, Todd.
That's the sweetest thing you've ever said to me.



...Do you need help getting rid of a body?

Is this about Carina?

No.

Yes.

Does she need help getting rid of a body?
No.
Okay.
I swear on the bones

of your grandmothers—who I know for a *fact* are both alive and still need them—

that I will never breathe a word of your NDA-protected intel to anyone or anything,

so help my precious dick.

Munch
munch
...

Carina told me she's attracted to women.

Holy *shit*.

I know.
But you can't tell anyone, Todd.
Of course not! Jesus.
How did that even come up?

I know you guys are pretty close, but.

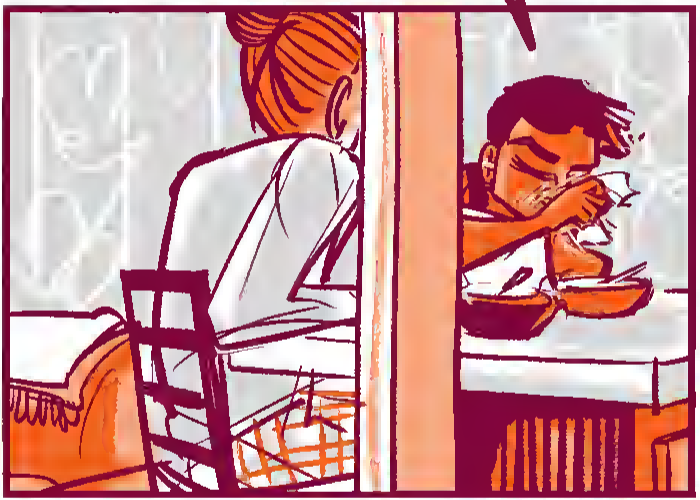
Is she thinking of coming out—?

No, no way.

She hates it when people know she has feelings.

I can't think of a worse nightmare for her than having to make any kind of public

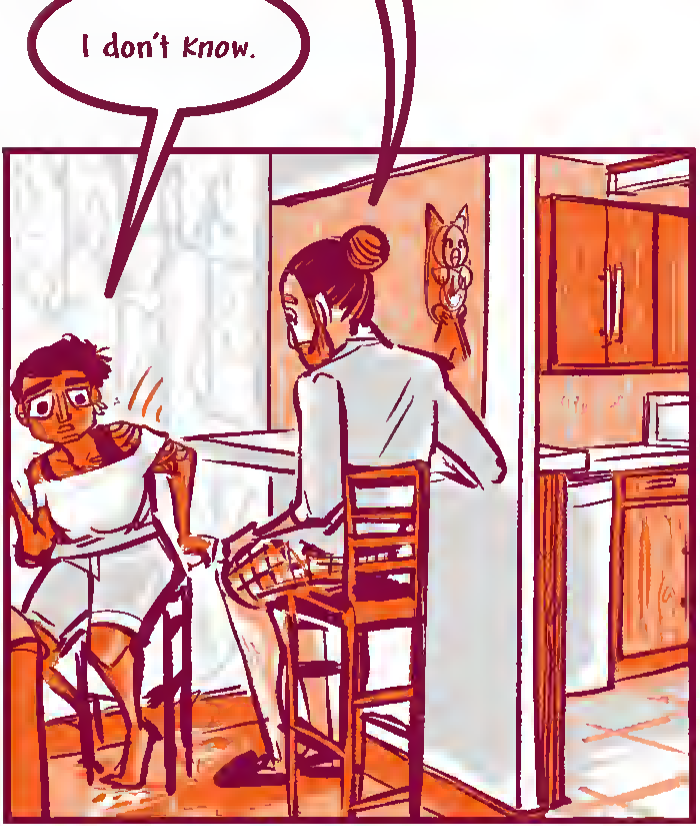
announcement about her love life, actual or aspirational.

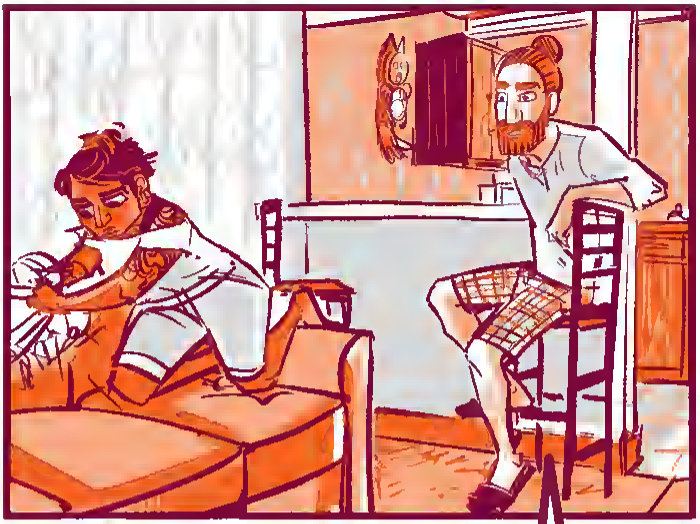


Well, why did she tell you?

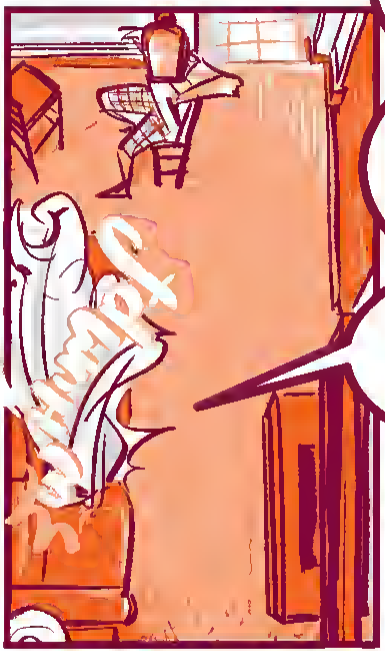
I don't know.

Like, does she want you to be her lesbian godmother and take her under your wing and teach her the secret lesbian handshakes?


I don't know.


Meera.
Do you think she's
into you?
That's what
I'm freaking
out about.

Shuffle



I can't tell, and I can always tell.

But I didn't even realize she wasn't straight!

Are there gaydar repairmen?

Meera.
...I want so badly for her to be into me that I can't tell if she actually is or not.

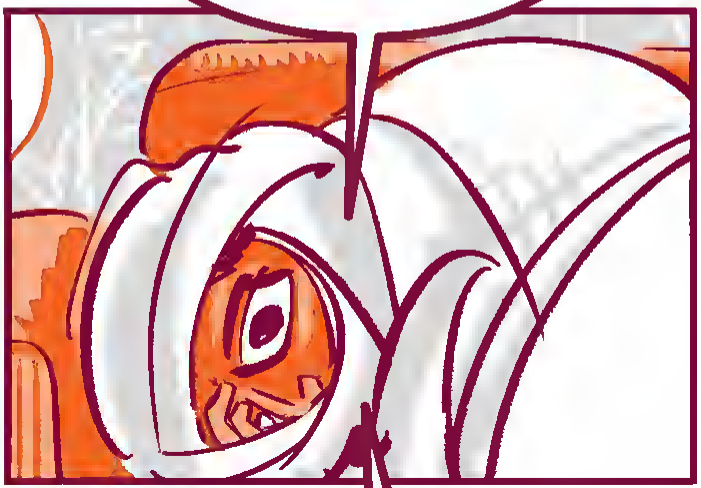
I mean, sometimes we're hanging out, and it seems like mayyybe...?

But I just don't know. I'm scared. It's weird.

...Plus, she's still your boss.
Hah! Right, so if I'm wrong, I'm *super duper* wrong.
And.

I don't want to be a source of anxiety for her, you know?

Like, it seems like she really needs me as a friend right now. I'm *her* stupidity safety valve.



I can't take that away, not while she's all freaked out about acknowledging her own human frailties or whatever.
Soooo you're gonna do nothing?
I'm gonna do nothing. It just doesn't feel like my place to make the first move, here.

Sounds kinda idiotic, but hey—you do you.

To Be continued
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